The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor, covering in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

WE PLEDGE—
I. ALL OUR POWER
IN UNITED EFFORT
FOR VICTORY

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WHOLE NO. 1615 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 1942 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer — VOL. 32, NO. 12

FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Traditionally, a red rag enrages bulls. Likewise, elephants are said to retain vengeful memories of those who feed them live cigar butts. It now seems that the reactionary press and the labor-haters in Congress feel the same way about the truth.

Within the past ten days, President Roosevelt, the heads of all Government war production agencies and the leaders of labor have given Congress the plain truth about the current labor situation.

If the gentlemen who are yelling for labor's scalp are sincere about wanting to win the war, if they are honest in saying they are only seeking the nation's welfare, if they are actuated by no secret, hidden, selfish motives, they should shut up right now.

But they haven't. They're still yelping and shouting and ranting away at full blast. They are not only ignoring the truth but they seem to be just as enraged by it as the bull or elephant we mentioned a while ago.

They have been told by every informed Government official from the President down that the 40-hour week does not limit production, that it should be retained as a standard. Yet they are still howling for its abolition.

Playing the Nazi Game

They have been told by the same official experts that overtime pay is not increasing war production costs, that it is necessary as an incentive for higher production. Yet they still are demanding that overtime pay be wiped out.

They have been shown official records proving that labor's no-strike policy has been almost 100 per cent effective and they have been told that labor's voluntary cooperation is bringing far better results than any restrictive laws could produce. Yet they are still screaming for a measure outlawing strikes.

No wonder many people are beginning to ask themselves whether the enemies of labor are not deliberately trying to sabotage the nation's war effort and give aid and comfort to the enemy! War Production Director Nelson and Wage-Hour Administrator Walling have warned that the senseless, endless, baseless, smear campaign against labor is doing that very thing—playing into the hands of the Nazi propagandists.

The New York Times in an editorial expresses the view that it is not good form for a Government official to accuse the enemies of labor of being the enemies of America. The New York Times in its editorials has been completely exonerated about the entire labor situation. We often wonder whether the men who write these editorials attacking labor read their own paper.

We say that because we found buried away in the financial section of the Sunday issue of the New York Times of March 22 an article by its business editor, C. F. Hughes, which completely refutes the insufferably pompous and thoroughly misinformed comments which have appeared in the editorial pages of the same paper with regrettable regularity.

The Times Contradicts Itself

Here is the record:

The New York Times said in an editorial March 21:

"The statistics of the National Industrial Conference Board show that the average actual hours per week per wage earner in January in 25 manufacturing industries were 42.4."

But Business Editor Hughes wrote on March 22:

"Authoritative figures show that war industries are operating on weekly schedules up to 65 hours, as in machine tools. The airplane plants were operating 48.7 and shipbuilders at 46.2 hours in January."

The New York Times said in an editorial March 13:

"The very purpose of the hours provisions of the Wage-Hour Law was to make it all but prohibitively costly for employers to maintain a working week of more than 40 hours."

But Mr. Hughes wrote in the same paper March 22:

"If last schedule (57-hour) week were adopted here there would be an increase over the 40-hour basis of 42 per cent in hours and a still greater increase in actual production. The increase in pay over the basic rate would be 15 per cent. Reduction in overhead and other fixed charges might offset this almost entirely. And it is to be remembered that corporation profits last year were 24 per cent above 1940 in spite of tax increases, sudden wage raises and output interruptions of one kind or another."

The Times said in an editorial March 8:

"The recent action of the House of Representatives in refusing to suspend the 40-hour week for the period of the war was profoundly discouraging."

But Mr. Hughes had this to say in the same paper:

"These labor proposals (such as abolishing the 40-hour week and overtime), it is to be feared, stem from suspect sources. Perhaps the whole matter would be dropped if producers knew exactly what it would cost how much time-and-a-half they have included in the $40,000,000,000 in war contracts which they have received."

Finally, the Times said in an editorial on March 14 that wages rose 20 per cent last year while the cost of living went up only half as much. But on page 11 of the same issue of the paper appeared a news story headed "Family Food Bill Up 25 Per Cent Since War."

We must repeat that we wish the editors of the New York Times would read their own paper and learn some facts.

Lies About Labor Nailed By Green And Roosevelt; All Federal War Chiefs Oppose Legislative Curbs; Congress May Probe Anti-Labor Propaganda Drive

Here are the facts submitted by President William Green to a sub-committee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, effectively nailing the lies about labor spread by enemies of America:

Forty-Hour Week

No Federal law or union contract limits working hours in any one day or week. Existing laws and union standards merely require payment of time and a half overtime for hours in excess of 40 a week.

Actually, work hours prevailing in war industries today range from 48 to 60 a week.

Overtime Pay

Payment of overtime is not standing in the way of increased war production. Out of 650 employers polled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 648 replied overtime payment did not restrict production. They blamed shortages of materials and other unrelated causes for delays.

Payment of overtime does not increase the cost of war production. A worker employed 50 hours a week and getting overtime for ten of those hours receives only 10 per cent more than if paid straight time. A Labor Department study proves, however, that increased production would be secured made possible by longer hours of production are more than enough to offset the 10 per cent increase in labor cost. The corporations studied added millions of dollars to their profits even while paying overtime to workers.

Elimination of overtime now would mean a payout for workers and still further profits for industries which have contracts for 50 billion dollars worth of war work with allowance made for overtime pay. More than half of all American workers have not received pay increases comparable with higher living costs and must count on overtime pay to make up the difference.

Strikes

Production delays due to strikes have virtually disappeared, Official Government statistics show that time lost by strikes in war work during January was 4/1000 of one per cent of time worked.

Strike losses last year from Jan. 1 to March 15 were at the rate of 12 hours per man-year of work. During the same period this year the rate was 16 minutes per man-year of work.

This is an amazing example of the success of voluntary cooperation of labor with the Government.

The Record

The record of performance proves that the workers of the United States have rallied in defense of free institutions.

We have consistently offered cooperation to the War Administration and to employers.

We can still do more.

We are giving our young men to the army and buying defense bonds from our weekly earnings.

The members of our unions are on the high seas as able-bodied seamen sailing the ships and the tankers that bring the raw materials to our forces. Members of our unions on boats without guns risk their lives, and many have lost their lives on tankers that have gone down.

Members of our building trades unions went to Alaska, Wake, Guam, the naval bases, the Canal Zone, where in constant danger they are building our defenses.

Members of our teamsters unions are on the Burma Road.

These workers give up safe, secure jobs to do their bit. They are the outposts for the line of supplies that begins with those working in the factories.

Other workers man the communication and transportation services within our country and connecting us with the outside world. Pilots in the transatlantic service are essential war workers.

Labor is a great creative force indispensable to national undertakings. It is wholeheartedly behind the war program, making voluntary sacrifices. I earnestly urge Congress not to take the heart out of this voluntary cooperation offered by American workers by fettering them with restrictive legislation. Compulsion can do nothing that free workers will not give in larger and more generous measure when they are offered the opportunity to cooperate.

Walling Sees Press Hoodwinked By Nazi Plot To Smear Labor

New York City.—The charge that Nazi propaganda was "behind this whole movement to do away with wage and hour standards" was made by L. Metcalfe Walling, administrator of the wage and hour division of the United States Department of Labor.

Asserting that most of the complaints he had received against the present Wage and Hour Law had come not from war industry but from marginal industries and from those who always had been against that law, Mr. Walling said that newspapers had been "taken in" by the propaganda. He said he believed most editorial writers who have called for suspension of some wage and hour provisions were sincere but that "their reasoning is in crying need of overhauling."

Speaking before the National Consumers League, Mr. Walling said those who sought to revise downward the standards of the Wage and Hour Law or to suspend it had "spread a fallacy" by comparing the 40-hour week here with the 40-hour week which had been part of the law in France. The French 40-hour week, he said, prevented utilization of plants for more than 40 hours a week, while under the law here an employer could operate his plant 168 hours a week by paying time and a half to individual workers after they had put in 40 hours.

"There has been too much confusion about that," he said. "I don't want to sound too sensational, but we know our enemies abroad are skillful and ingenious in propaganda and they know their men. They know our weaknesses and know the technique of dividing us.

"The Nazi propaganda machine is behind this whole movement to do away with wage and hour standards, although I cannot cite chapter and verse, and the newspapers have been taken in."

Mr. Walling said the relation between wages and prices was built upon the time-and-a-half overtime and that elimination of the extra pay for overtime would be, in effect, a general wage cut.

"We might as well admit that labor is not going to take what amounts to a wage cut," he said. "I believe the reason the big-league employers are not pushing to kill the overtime pay idea is that they know that would produce a great surge by labor to revise the hourly basis upward to make up for the difference in loss of overtime money. That might create a serious upheaval in production for the war."

"Reviewing all the facts," he said, "I can only conclude that it isn't the Wage and Hour Law which needs adjusted to the war emergency. It is the reasoning of editorial writers, some of them not far from where we are meeting, and of nondefense employers that is in crying need of overhauling."

Demands For Inquiry Grow As Evidence Shows Plot To Club Congress

Washington, D. C.—Congressional investigation of the "Oklahoma blitzkrieg"—a secretly organized and financed attempt to club Congress into adopting anti-labor legislation—appeared assured as this edition went to press.

The inquiry was demanded by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor and many Government and Congressional leaders who quickly spotted the phoney source of the flood of messages emanating from Oklahoma demanding that strikes be outlawed and the 40-hour week abolished.

In a statement to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee which is looking into the war production picture, Mr. Green said:

"An organized attempt has been made to confuse and mislead the American people in the midst of a war effort, to undermine their confidence in the Administration and to create disunity and strife in the ranks of workers and employers who have joined hands in a united war production effort.

"This has been the result of, chiefly, well financed and deliberately planned campaign in the State of Oklahoma.

"Who are the men behind this drive? Who is paying for it? Where do the thousands of dollars that are being spent in conducting it come from? What is the connection between the solving a Oklahoma City and the anti-war rallies and mass meetings organized in Oklahoma shortly before Pearl Harbor?

"These are the questions the American people are entitled to have answered promptly and exhaustively. These are the questions which should be answered by an exhaustive Congressional investigation.

"Here are the facts describing the Oklahoma March offensive:

"The Oklahoma Publishing Company of Oklahoma City are the publishers of the Oklahoma City Times and the Daily Oklahoman.

"Beginning with the week of March 8th, on their editorial pages and in their news columns these two publications started a frontal attack on the real 40-hour workweek and to outlaw strikes.

"As the Oklahoma press well knows there is no such thing as the 40-hour workweek in the war industries to repeal, because most war industries are employing workers longer hours.

"As the Oklahoma press also knows there has not been a single strike involving a dollars' loss in the defense war industries since December 7, 1941.

"It is reported that tens of thousands of telegrams, letters and postcards brought to our attention representing forms and postcards were printed.

"This evidence is sufficient to justify a prompt, fair and impartial investigation by a Congressional committee of the financial sources, background and affiliations of the individuals and organizations making these blitz attacks on labor, creating disunity and disrupt America's war effort."

ARNOLD PROBE URGED BY JUDGE PADWAY

Washington, D. C.—Joseph A. Padway, counsel for the American Federation of Labor, urged a Government investigation of Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold following charges of anti-trust suits of two labor unions, a dozen individuals and four chain stores charged with labor-relations violations.

In granting Padway's motion for a directed acquittal, Federal District Court Judge Goldsborough said:

"I have never, in all my 40 years' experience, tried a case that was absolutely devoid of evidence as this."

Padway charged that Arnold, whose office conducted the prosecution, has deliberately attempted to smear and persecute labor unions under anti-trust laws even though the U. S. Supreme Court has held unions immune from those laws.

Thus far every single case brought against labor unions by Arnold has been tossed out by the courts.

AFL WINS BARGAINING POLL

Indianapolis, Ind.—An election held by the National War Labor Relations Board at the McCray Refrigerator Company plant to choose a representative for collective bargaining resulted in a victory for AFL Federal Union No. 22567 by a vote of 185 to 16.

United Front Against Enemies of Labor And New Deal Fights Vicious Propaganda

Washington, D. C.—Led by President Roosevelt and AFL President William Green, an imposing array of outstanding Government and labor officials publicly exposed the lies and misrepresentations on which the current anti-labor drive is based.

They presented a united and powerful front against any legislation that would abolish the 40-hour week, wipe out overtime requirements, outlaw strikes or otherwise destroy labor standards.

The President threw all his influence into the fight against labor's foes, realizing they were actually trying to destroy the New Deal and recognizing in them the same reactionaries that have opposed his foreign and domestic policies in the past.

Mr. Green, appearing before a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, nailed the anti-labor lies one by one with forceful facts. He proved that labor is on the job and has made tremendous progress in increasing war production.

Lie No. 1 nailed by Mr. Green was the charge that the 40-hour week limits production. Actually prevailing time schedules in war industries are from 48 to 60 hours a week per man, he showed.

Lie No. 2 nailed by Mr. Green was the charge that the required overtime payment of time and a half for hours in excess of forty a week are retarding production and increasing the nation's war bill. He proved that employers themselves do not object to paying overtime and that savings from increased production more than absorb the slightly higher labor cost.

Lie No. 3 nailed by Mr. Green was the charge that strikes are delaying vital production. He proved that time lost through strikes since the war has been infinitesimal. He declared in ringing tones that labor has voluntarily renounced strikes and will not countenance strikes for the duration.

War production Director Nelson, Army and Navy chiefs, Secretary of Labor Perkins, Wage-Hour Administrator Walling and a host of other Government and Congressional leaders fully corroborated Mr. Green's statements and praised labor's enthusiastic cooperation in the war effort.

Speaking from Chicago, AFL Vice President Daniel J. Tobin stalwartly defended labor's war record and assailed industry for delaying war production.

Mr. Green also took the offensive in this regard, giving direct evidence to the Senate committee that many employers have shown reluctance in converting their industries to war production and have accumulated vast stores of semi-manufactured supplies and materials for civilian use in direct defiance of Government orders. Lack of these supplies is hampering war production, Mr. Green charged.

Government spokesmen like Nelson and Walling also decried the attacks on labor as playing right into Hitler's hands by creating disunity in America.

On this score, Mr. Green asked Congress to investigate secretly organized and financed campaigns in Oklahoma and other Southern States to discredit labor and force anti-labor legislation.

Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee were deeply impressed by Mr. Green's testimony and expressed regret that the newspaper and radio commentators have not given the public the facts about labor's tremendous contributions to the nation's war effort.

They agreed with Mr. Green and President Roosevelt that compulsion cannot force free workers to give America better service than they are already giving in full measure wherever the opportunity is afforded them.

Nelson Lauds Labor's War Record, Opposes Restrictive Legislation

Washington, D. C.—Branding as outright falsehoods charges that labor has failed to cooperate in the war effort, Donald M. Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board, warned Congress against legislation restricting labor.

The war production director declared the purpose of the "fiendish attacks on labor" is to "get the American people into the same pitfalls Hitler created for the people of countries in the United States would take the trouble to read just what you have said."

He pointed out that since Pearl Harbor airplane output has increased more than 50 per cent, with warplanes being produced at the rate of 3,000 a month.

Mr. Nelson's statements were made before the Byrnes-Jenkins Senate Appropriations Committee which is inquiring into war production. Senator Byrnes commented:

"I wish some of the high-ranking columnists in the United States would take the trouble to read just what you have said."

Emphasizing that the nation has complete confidence in Mr. Nelson, Senator Hayden asked him the direct question as to whether he thought additional labor legislation is now needed. Mr. Nelson replied:

"Senator, it is my considered judgment that no legislation I know of in the particular field would be helpful at the present time. And it is my considered opinion that ill-advised legislation might be very harmful to this production effort."

Green And Pepper Phone Greetings To Florida State Convention

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor was forced to call off a visit to the Florida State Federation of Labor Convention in Jacksonville, but he was able to address the delegates indirectly through a clever expedient arranged by Senator Claude Pepper of Florida.

The Senator prepared a telephone hookup to the convention hall and invited Mr. Green to join him in extending greetings to the assembled representatives of Florida workers. The talk was a complete surprise to the delegates.

Speaking from the Senator's office in the Capitol, Mr. Green called upon Florida workers to regard themselves as soldiers of democracy and give the nation the best service they are capable of in this time of crisis.

"I am proud of the record you boys have made in Florida. Keep up the good work. Do not allow a few selfish men to destroy it by strikes."

Senator Pepper, who was warmly endorsed by Mr. Green as a sympathetic friend of labor, declared that the cause of labor is now being widely misrepresented by those with selfish interests to serve. He added:

"Too many people in and out of Congress are wrapping a flag round themselves while they try to destroy the gains made by labor through sacrifice and struggle.

"Labor is making important sacrifices now to help win the war and it should not be penalized for its patriotic services.

"We see who are the friends of real democracy must stand together now to defend the gains of the past both at home and throughout the world.

"There is no class in America today more devoted to democracy, more loyal to American ideals and more eager to perform its full duty than the working men and women of this country."

Sen. Murray Blasts Anti-Labor Slanders

By the HON. JAMES E. MURRAY,
United States Senator from Montana

(The following statement by Senator Murray was broadcast over the Mutual System during the America's Forum of the Air Program.)

A great, poisonous cloud has been spread across the United States—propaganda designed to create disunion and defeatism among our people. That is a dangerous situation and we must get to the right or wrong of it without rancor or delay.

While 48 hours the newspapers of America could bring about complete understanding and unity; but instead a large section of the press is consciously or unconsciously supporting those enemies of democracy who know that this war can be lost if public opinion becomes irresolute and divided. That is the purpose which has accomplished the ruin of Europe.

The so-called issue of the 40-hour week has all the earmarks of a studied plan to place profits above patriotic interest. We are being diverted from fighting the Axis and set to fighting each other. Editorial half-truths and deliberate untruths have given our people the impression that our labor laws restrict production for war. They would lead us to believe that by strikes and wage disputes the American workers is retarding the war program. Let me tell you as an indisputable fact supported by indisputable figures that out of approximately 6,000,000 people now employed in war industries less than 100 are on strike.

The Senate subcommittee studying war production has just reported that slow-down in production is not due to labor or labor laws but to failure of supplies and material preventing maximum production. Just read that report, supported by Republican and Democratic Senators alike, giving the lie to this libel against labor.

All this talk of repeal comes from men who are chiefly interested in destroying our laws intended to improve the economic and social welfare of the people. They point to the heroes of Bataan who are going through hell for $21 a month. "Why," they ask, "should anyone object to working overtime at the same wage as he is doing?" The fact is the soldier gave up his share of the family income and duty of support when he entered the service. The American soldier will not be rewarded with more than his family's income is proposed to be still further cut and his service to our country used as a source. And all this in the face of the fact that industry is making unconscionable profits.

What if it that we want here? Why, maximum production. How are we to get it—by cracking heads? Absolutely not. We will get maximum production only in one way—by voluntary cooperation of free American labor and free American industry. The very labor standards we fought so many years to gain are now helping to make possible a united people and total war production. Destroy that and you will block production. Repeal will not benefit our country but only increase war profits and create resentment. It will bring only one certain result: confusion and discord at a time when national unity is a matter of life and death. Those who would thus wreck our national unity are as guilty of sabotage as those alien enemies who would wreck our industrial plants and military efforts.

•Wake up, Americs! Let your opposition to this scheme be neither too little nor too late.

"We Are With You To Finish," Green Cables Australian Labor

Washington, D. C.—President William Green of the American Federation of Labor cabled to the "free and unconquerable workers" of Australia a pledge that American labor "will do its job" to rush war aid to Australia as quickly as possible.

Mr. Green's message, addressed to Albert E. Monk, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions at Melbourne, follows:

"Greetings from the free and unconquerable workers of America to the free and unconquerable workers of Australia! We are with you to the last ounce of our strength.

"Fate has placed you directly in the path of our common foe. Your fight is our fight, your front is our front, your victory will be our victory as well.

"America has sent you our great military hero, General MacArthur. We have sent you our own boys to fight beside you. Our ships, tanks, planes and guns will speed in an unending stream across the Pacific to your shores until victory is won.

"In behalf of our soldiers of production of the home front, I pledge that American labor will do its job so that these supplies will reach you as quickly as possible."